

Courant





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Au Courant

Denny Dragon was a good dragon. He meant no harm, to anyone, for any reason. He lived all alone, somewhere of little significance, and it was the only way he could live. He would spend his days gathering toadstools, for they were his nourishment. And each evening, as the sun was falling, he would dine, fully enjoying the day's work. Occasionally he would vary this routine by working twice as hard gathering toadstools one day, and then spending the entire next day in the sun on top of a nearby mountain. But this was not often, because he did not mind the dark forest where he did his gathering.

Despite his seeming isolation, Denny had friends—a great number of friends—who enjoyed his company every evening after the sun had set. They were good friends, and would travel the distance to Denny's home each night, uncomplainingly, although it was quite far for some of them, who were quite small. But they never failed to arrive, not even once, because it was what they had always done, and what all their relatives before them had done; for although they had but a short life span, Denny lived forever, because he was a dragon.

One day, there was a catastrophe—because something happened that had never happened before. And because it had never happened before, all were at a loss as to what they should do. Their daily routine had been shattered, and this also had never before occurred: Sir Shedagall had arrived.

He was a bold and gallant knight, but appeared very evil and nasty. Beneath this seemingly repulsive exterior was a heart of gold, but no one understood, and believed him to be only evil and nasty, because that was the impression he gave. They all turned to

Denny, because he was the personification of everything good and right for them. He would know what to do.

Denny contemplated the matter very carefully, but could come to no conclusion. At that moment Sir Shedagall arrived to determine whether Denny was a good dragon or an evil one; Sir Shedagall was on a mission to seek out and destroy the **most** evil, fiercest, ugliest dragon in the region. If this dragon did not meet the qualifications (which he certainly didn't), he would move on and find another one that **would** qualify.

When Sir Shedagall was actually faced with Denny he was terribly alarmed, lost all sense of reason, and immediately crushed him—for there was nothing else he could do.

Diane Best



Courageous men indifferent in battle
Flashing brightly on the screen
Black, white dots and specks
Of pantherized men who want no
More than to see

it for it sees them
captures
enraptures

Totals of solidarity seek, only
to see.

We are here
me i sip coke
languid
luxurious
scintillating ads
flashing brightly on the screen
Scream
Wean me away

from this freak
round sugar-coated world

And let me live
love
love, but they
how can they be indifferent
to such
capitalize
the enemy cries for help
into the shallow empty
darkness
of indifference
and hears only silence.
Apply also vice-versa.

me i sip coke.

Gali Hagel



A Modest Proposal for Honoring a
Great and Illustrious Personnage
And for Ridding the Country of a
Four-yearly Tempest for at Least
Twenty Years or 'Till Death Do Us
Part

It is a thought painful to the hearts of all rational clear-thinking Americans that this November, in the year of our Lord, Nineteen hundred and sixty-eight, our quiet, gentle, peace-loving nation will be thrust once more into that fierce, horrendous, emotionally-charged maelstrom which sets brother against brother, father against son, husband against wife. This fact is made all the more poignant by the thought that through the pressure of various low, despicable, un-patriotic persons, we shall lose as the leader of our country, one of the most gracious, noble, and wise men ever to set foot on the rich, fertile soil of America. This man, a man who has bravely stood by us, leading us through thick and thin, through good times and bad, through bombs bursting in air by the dawn's early light, who has protected not only us, but the entire Free World from men dedicated to the destruction of all that is good and decent in this world today, is Lyndon Baines Johnson, our thirty-sixth president. Our leader has often been criticized by certain of those sworn enemies of the Free World, who have by different nefarious means pushed their way into some of the highest positions in the land. These evil men, using our God-given right of free speech as a cloak for their vile, slanderous propaganda, have un-patriotically and unmercifully besmirched the credibility of our honorable president.

My proposal would eliminate once and for all, these cruel attacks, by providing the country with a firm leader, and by persuading all and sundry of the in-advisability of such criticism. I propose to make Lyndon Baines Johnson our first emperor.

At first glance, this plan might be difficult to put into action, but in reality, with planning, nothing could be simpler. In the confusion of what would hopefully be our last election for many years, approximately three days before the election, itself, Mr. Johnson would be declared Emperor, and three days later, rather than a choice of candidates, a plebiscite would be submitted to the people, carefully worded, of course, to take care of any confusion resulting from the cancellation of the elections.

This plan, startling as it might seem to those not prepared for such action, is actually not new. Napoleon Bonaparte, by similar action, rescued his country from almost certain ruin, and in the process, made a name for himself which shall never be forgotten. In ancient Rome, a wise and experienced man was appointed dictator in time of crises. This kept the country in order, and brought much honor upon the heads of great men.

There are many obvious advantages to my proposal, which I feel cannot help but win allies to this point of view.

Firstly, it would, of course, be a great honor, and it would hopefully atone for some of the injustice done our president by unkind critics.

Secondly, it would free him to follow the dictates of his conscience unhindered by the piercing squeals of certain "nervous Nellys" who have doubted the wisdom of Mr. Johnson's war against aggression and oppression.

Thirdly, with these voices silenced, the country could once more subside into a calm and quiet state, relieved of the anxious furor stirred up by these doubting Thomases, secure in the knowledge that the news system, gently guided by the Emperor, would tell them what was deemed necessary that they know, and no more.

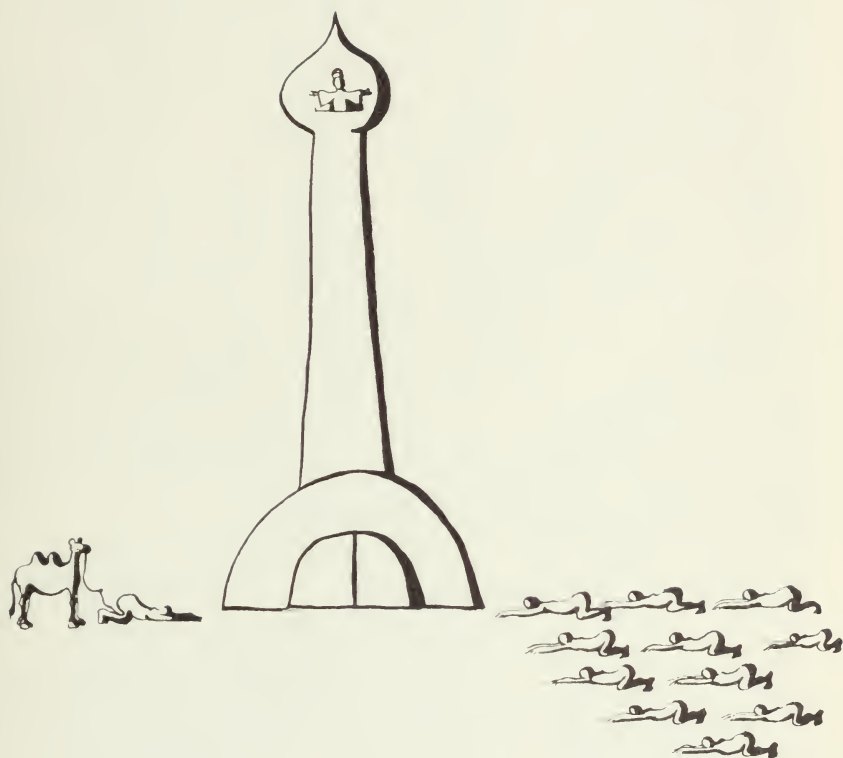
Fourthly, with an Emperor, and a large glittering court in Washington, there would surely be a drop in the crime rate, for all people in the lower walks of life would perceive what rank, what pomp and circumstance can be achieved by someone who abides by the law of the land to a certain extent.

I am convinced that no person is, or will be able to conceive of a plan of equal excellence. Therefore let no one rave on, with insane suggestions of other candidates, be they Republican, Democrat, or undecided.

This appears to the author to be the only logical solution to the quandry our country is in, at the moment, and it is hoped that it will be given serious consideration. To this end, may I state that I have no personal interest in this plan. Considering my extreme youth and inexperience, I could not hope for more than a small duchy.

All hail Lyndon, by election, by prescription, and by conquest, Emperor over all the United States, Prince of Washington, King of Texas, and Lord Protector of South Vietnam!

Betsy Gifford





The rain falls but does not lie
 Stagnant
 At the nadir of the earth—
It falls in order to rise again—
 Guided by the heat of a gaseous
 sphere above
Rising to a higher ethereal state than
 that from which it fell.
And man? Comme la pluie.
 Madelon Curtis



HAPPY DAEFARD

The Commons: Impressions

the clever intellectual who primly bends his well-suited knee to the water, "You know, this pool wasn't made for you, you foolish ducks," with the duck of greater intellect who silently replies, "You know, this world wasn't made for you, you foolish people,"

the army of businessmen who goose-step by, wriggling in the frigidity of their step—"Business has gone up 3%",

the drunk in sagging coat, who raises his rolling head from spastic hands, to cross with hesitation to the virile boy on the next bench, crumpling to his knees, and whispering with utter, heaving hope, "Are you God?" to the virile, sterile boy, who, with embarrassment and contempt, moves away,

the tiny scrub-faced boy who walks behind his Amazonic mother, oblivious to the dancing chipmunk in his trembling concentration to catch up with her,

the young girl who self-consciously averts her glazed eyes from the singing world around her . . .

No, No, ABSOLUTELY NOT,
NO NEVER EVER

but look . . .

the loving lovers under the weeping willow (which, by the way, gives one the slightest suspicion that it is perhaps only shaking its shoulders in helpless laughter),

the child who laughs at the bug that bites his hand,

the people who stop, in the midst of the swooping children of
Phoenix, and then look up to each other's smiling faces . . .

YES !Yes again, and
always yes.

Ellen Junker



The sea lashes out against swimmers.
The wind fights trees.

When I was two, the sea helped me
dig holes to China.
The wind danced with my hair.

I don't play or dance much any more either;
I am at war, too.

Jane Heifetz



Sometimes when it seems all a lie,
Your essence you can't justify —
Forsake your dreams and verify
That you exist, and don't deny
That we are equal, you and I
In consequence. Then question why
And if you **feel**, then I reply
No longer are you scared to die.

Nancy Steele

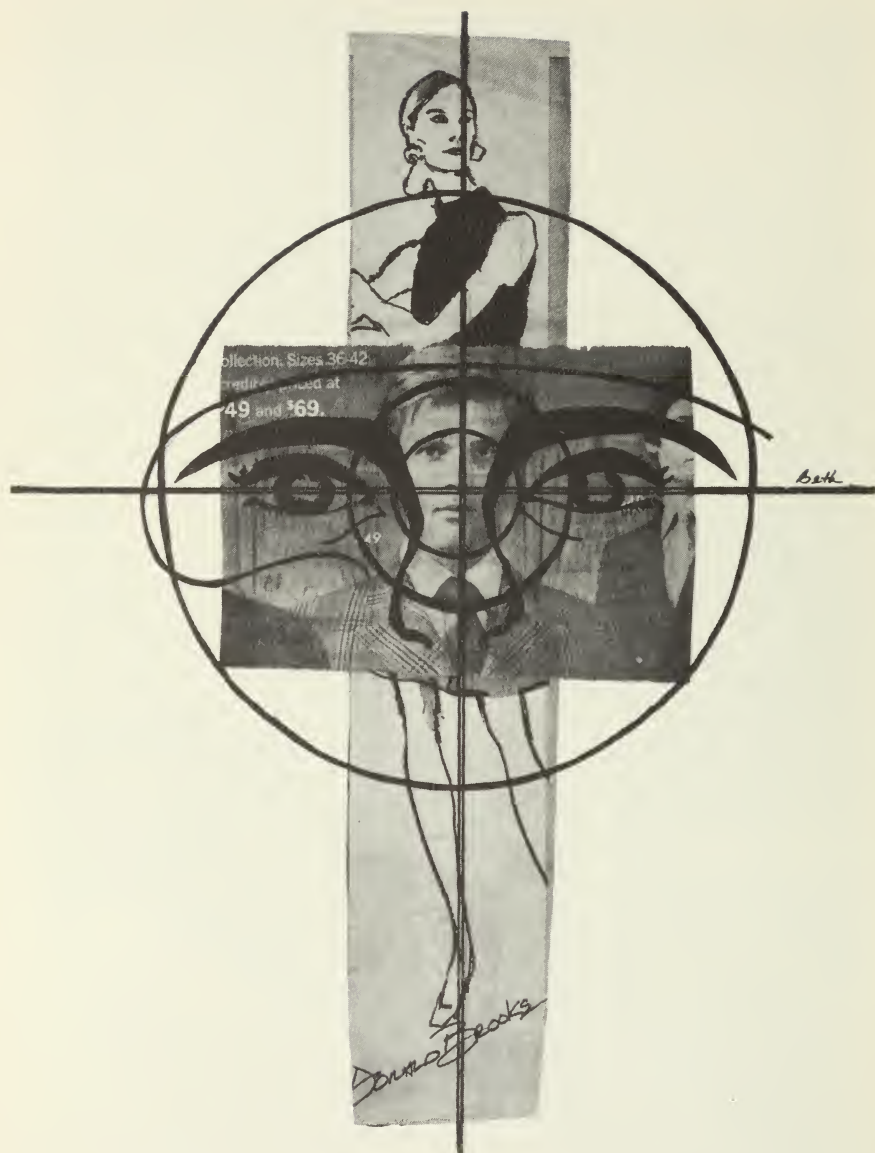




Marching —
Like a long lost soldier
Falling—
From the powerful swords cast at me.
Wandering—
Hoping to come to a stepping stone
Pleading—
My way through rough storms encountered
Continuing.
Spotting a faint light.
Watching it fade
Hoping—
To reach my destiny
Falling—
Back into the depressing unknown.
Walking —
To find myself years from my goal
Shouting—
In search
Crying—
In despair
Growing—
Old and tired
Staring—
At the impossible.

Kim Streeter





The epitome of the couldn't - give - a - damn attitude. I am the only one in a seat by herself on the bus coming back from the dance. Feet up on the seat, head leaning against the window, hat over my eyes — ALOOF.

Now head banging against window in syncopated time to the vibrations of the bus. The ache in the back of my neck has extended its tentacles and enveloped the entire upper portion of my body. But don't let anyone know you're awake, Heifetz. You can't get up and make yourself comfortable. Suffer if you have to, but the trick is to convince them that you feel **nothing**.

Everyone around me feels obligated to make noises. It's like a giant sponge of sound hovering over us, about to descend and absorb everyone except me. Occasionally something is discernible:

"Oh, wasn't he darling!"

"That guy with Debbie was so queer. He shook her hand! Not even a good-night kiss! How embarrassing!"

A hair has strayed onto my cheek and is bothering the hell out of me. Christ! It feels like a wire digging into my skin. But I can't brush it away because then they'll know I'm awake, and they'll start asking me those damn questions. The hair is scratching its way up onto my eyelid. It scrapes against me every time the bus jerks. Don't bring your hand up, Heifetz! Just move your head slightly and the hair will go away. Aha! Success! I'm getting pretty good at this. One can easily get into the habit of staying detached. It's much more satisfying than making inane conversation and attempting to explain to them why I'm sitting alone.

"He's **very** intellectual. He wrote a **three** page article in 'Noon-mark.' It was very deep, y'know?"

"Did you see Doug Murphy? He looked so-o cool!"

"Hey Heifetz! Heifetz!"

"Maybe she's dead."

"And did you see ?"

The rain bombarding the back of my head and the swish-swap, swish-swap coming from the front of the bus blot out the sounds inside. I start to doze off. My hand brushes against my cheek . . . wet. But the windows are tightly shut.

Jane Heifetz

To Be Civilized and Brave

Thomas Carlyle demanded in **The French Revolution**, "Is man's civilization only a wrappage through which the savage nature of him can still burst forth, infernal as ever?" If one accepts the premise that man is in reality no more than a beast, an animal whose superior intellect makes his violent, primordial instincts appear more monstrous than those of any other in nature, then civilization can be accredited as little more than an artificial restraint in perpetual danger of being obliterated by those who have imposed it upon themselves. This pessimistic definition of man is, however, a far cry from those who gloriously pictured themselves as "but a step below the angels." Neither definition is really satisfactory, but if man can be considered a fluid blend of the bestial and the angelic, then it must be through the civilization — the laws, the institutions, and the beauty that he creates for himself and places above himself, that he progresses toward his potential goodness and greatness.

If the task of education were only to make us "civilized", this end could be most efficiently reached through total conditioning and mind-control, perhaps as depicted in Huxley's **Brave New World**. One could thus easily produce a race of exemplarily refined, contented, non-aggressive, "civilized" men whose only deficiency would be an inability to **think**. There could be in such a society no creation, no originality, no bravery with which to innovate or change, for while this world could be materially successful, it would be a society whose components had become machines rather than men.

Today's disturbed world precludes the possibility of such a dubiously utopian method of procuring peace and equality. To be civilized must mean to be aware of what man has done and is doing, of both his successes in raising himself from the beasts through law, through the beauty he has created, and through his ideals and of his failures, his destruction, his breaking of his own laws, his aban-

doning his reason to prejudices. To be brave demands that we help rectify man's failings, that we oppose the society which perpetuates these wrongs. The fight should ideally be won through reason and constructive forces, but the external trappings of civilization must be subservient to the internal; if change can come no other way, to be brave demands paradoxically that we fight savagely for the salvation of man's freedom, his equality, his ideals, his peace—for true civilization.

Susan Cohen





"To whom dost thou belong?" was the inquiry

"My soul!" he replied.

"Ah, but to whom visibly?"

"My soul. My soul, I say! My soul!

I am my soul!

What you see is my soul!

What you hear is my soul!

What you feel is my soul!

I am my soul!

My soul is what you see!"

"I fear I am blind, then." was the reply.

Kim Streeter

For those of us who perhaps have no meaningful god
We search for one of our own
He was my god

Among other things I suppose

They see me
And they tell each other to pity me
She lost something dear to her they say
And yet I pity them
For they never even knew him
They never knew my god
I believe I was even in love with him
And I do laugh
Because I didn't love him
Society has not yet decided on a word
I could use

And still not mean something else

Something less

Something much

less

But they never even knew him
And what else have they never known
How can I not be happy with all these memories
He would lie there
As he did that last time
We were one
We gave no explanations
Needed none

But they never even knew him

Or maybe they never cared

They would cheer for apple pie
Of course

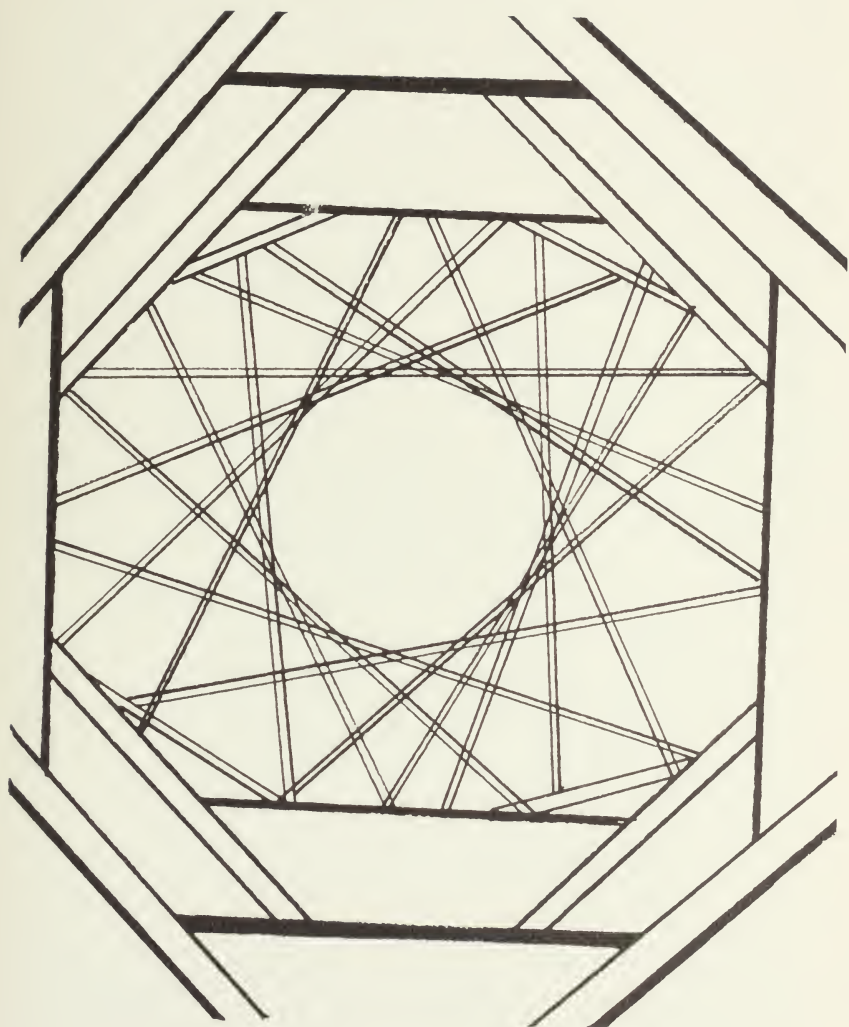
Wave some cloth for the winning team
(somehow always the winning team)
They even had some polished sunday ritual
I was often told about this god they worshipped
 He was a heavy pocket
 And tight awkward shoes
 And sometimes even the girl next door
(too often the girl next door)

We cared
For each other
The unnoticed worm now writhing in the puddle
We cared for life
And they told us they were happy
But how could they be
Why they never even knew him
They never even knew my god
 Kate Durham

I am afraid of what has happened to me.

What has happened to me. I enclosed myself in a cocoon of mirrors, many-edged and hard, returning only what was given. But my many-colored, sun-reflecting walls have shattered into crystals blinding from all angles, not just inside out; they are tearing me defenseless as I grasp at fast-escaping fragments. My too-soon metamorphosis. I am left dull and heavy, naked - against all expectation, still a vulnerable and ugly worm.

Susan Cohen





Death: Before and After Life

His eyes are blue and cold. Staring at something only his mind can see, they appear glazed and thoughtful, and only start when a small megaphone in one of the upper corners of the room makes a brief announcement, "Thirty minutes left." Silence reigns once more in the padded cubicle, and it is a silence which the man seems to relish. His age is somewhere in that in-between stage classified as middle age, and though his mouse-brown hair is still abundant, his other physical features would hardly be termed attractive. A nervous twitch in his left eye is the only movement that disturbs the still air, and the man's contemplative attitude remains unchanged as the minutes outside tick by. His entire attitude is that of submission. Suspended above the man's head, one of the more recent inventions of this twenty-first century, consisting of a long metal rod, with wires attached to the wall, leads to a small recording device in the next room. Slowly, the apparatus revolves, constantly entering the man's thoughts on paper, for several privileged personalities to skim in their leisure:

"It always ends this way: 'I shouldn't have done it.' Should I have? Perhaps it was inevitable. My life was well-ordered, as was my future. I loved my role in life almost as much as I loved them. And I obeyed the ten conventions to the letter. I attended every orgy, was healthfully promiscuous, and never engaged in serious talk. Of course I was never alone; They used to tell us that privacy is death. It must be, since this small amount of time I have to myself before I die is the only time I've ever really been alone. This death, this act of mercy that They are imposing upon me, is another example of Their benevolence and wisdom. They claim I am ill in the mind, and insanity being one of the signs of senility, I must, of course, be exterminated. Again, They are right: I must be insane, or else my entire society is. The doubts my mind has been harboring lately frigh-

ten me; yet can anyone argue that they are unjustly founded? I have found myself condemning this society for all its fickleness and light-heartedness. I may well be insane, for never have my thoughts run in such serious veins.

"I must have had tendencies toward this sort of behavior from the very start. I remember I used to watch those almost imperceptible flashes on the wall and trained myself to allow my conscious mind to pick them up. 'Balk at talk,' they said, or that terrifying picture associated with 'Alone'. Why should anyone want to be alone? It means death. I wonder why they bother to project those thoughts across the walls before you even know they're there; naturally everybody agrees with them anyway.

"I was different from the rest; maybe I shouldn't have been. I must have been restless. Every day consisted merely of finding out what job I would be allowed to do for Them and having done it, I would follow conformity by attending an orgy, or having an Experience in one of the Sonic Rooms. It must have been a few years ago that I really began to get restless and irritable, but because I wanted to avoid irritability and disagreement at all costs, I began to spend endless spans of time on ESR, until my irritable mind was pleasantly glossed over and I could continue leading the perfect life.

"Yes, irritability breeds contempt, contempt breeds jealousy, and jealousy lead to lust for power. At all costs we must keep the peace, or else this one sanctuary, this one dome on this barren planet, will be disrupted by war. I read in that book that at one time there were millions of people leading private lives on the bare face of this planet. I got the impression that there were other things as well, such as green things, and beings other than humans. Now there is nothing, except this wonderful place we live in. War can not reach us. We are content with Them, and with ourselves. Am I the only one that knows of such things? Or have They lost books before?

"I must say it was careless, even for Them. They must have rooms and rooms full of books, just waiting to be devoured. Why do They keep them from us? The fact that I found one still astounded me, but I did not argue it. Never had I realized so much, all of which was before me all the time; and never had I been so puzzled. My mind reeled. Even ESR failed to ease my mind after I had read those first few pages, and so I read on. That book, that wonderful, frightening book, held so much between its covers. It spoke of death, but not in a terrifying sense. One of the chapters, "Life, Before and After Death", implied that there is a life after death. Is there? Perhaps this last half-hour of mine is not my last after all.

"There were other topics too, ideas so remote from my present life, and yet so beautifully inspiring that I could not stop reading. Perhaps that is why They keep the books from us, for my head was filled with so many new, impressive notions that I even began to question the utopianism of this society. In any case, the words I read were like an addictive drug to me. I could not stop. I remember the trouble I used to have trying to find a momentarily quiet corner where I could read a few pages at a time. My frustration was immense, and it was a frustration I had never had cause to feel before. Are privacy and contemplation nonexistent? Does nobody think seriously in this small world of ours besides Them? My mind is in turmoil, and my thoughts fluctuate constantly from Their way of thinking to my own. Are we happy or merely existing?

"It was Gev who betrayed me. She used to watch me with my new possession, and, convinced of my insanity, reported me to Them. If They know all, why hadn't They found out sooner? Now it does not matter; now nothing matters. My brief moment of truth is over, and all my plans for the future are lost. Perhaps They are right after all. They foiled me, and life will go on. Is there a life after death? I am ignorant of such things. Perhaps They would know."

The recording device continues to revolve, but now there are only a few revolutions left.

Margaret Cheney



Herd

The ugly leading the way
From the lightness to the dark
Herding the others quietly
Through the rocks hard and damp.

The blind all came
Gripping hands and moaning
Stumbling, falling, noiselessly
Crawling with the others.

The mauled and the tortured
Were at the front of the group.
The bewildered and the diseased
Were the leaders of the life.

The beautiful and the bright,
The lovely of body and mind;
The ones that knew of nothing,
They all came behind.

Linn Comley



Symbolization Personified

The roar of wind filled my ears,
 and my heart gnawed my chest.
The sounds of both, piercingly crescendoed,
'Til gradually,
I passed the open space.

And there, the sound was silenced away,
 'Til in that cessation,
Only my torn breathing was audible.

Ellen Junker

